

July 9, 1996

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SUBJECT: **Deputy Secretary's Focus Report**

The following is a brief summary of Department of Transportation events and items of interest from the past month:

**OPERATIONAL ITEMS:**

**FIRST TDM ACTION STRATEGY EXPECTED**

Working closely with the Puget Sound Regional Council, staff of the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Resource Center at OUM is leading an effort that will result in the first TDM Action Strategy for the central Puget Sound region. PSRC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, like the state's Transportation Plan, includes a heavy reliance on TDM to accommodate growth in trips. It is hoped that development of the action strategy will lead towards a prioritizing of projects for funding that is consistent with adopted plans and policies.

**RTAP MAJOR SOURCE FOR TRAINING SUPPORT**

Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) continues to be a principal source for training support. RTAP has partnered with WSTA, the Washington State Insurance Pool, and the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest to identify and provide 16 training programs over the next 12 months. The selection was based on a statewide needs assessment and personal interviews with stakeholders and customers. The schedule of events will be published by all the partners, and will be featured in the July issue of the Grass Routes newsletter.

**THREE-SIDED BRIDGE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND**

The Hydraulics Office is evaluating a new type of concrete structure, which is a three-sided precast concrete bridge section. These structures provide better fish migration and wildlife habitat because the natural stream bottom is maintained through the structure. Precasting the units enables them to be put into place at the project site without the possibility of any fresh concrete getting into the stream. The Department of Fish and Wildlife supports the

use of these structures, where fish habitat is an important concern. The Hydraulics Office has been working closely with the Bridge and Structures Office and with the New Products Committee on the final evaluation and approval of these structures. There are three different Northwest companies that currently manufacture these units.

#### **WSDOT & AASHTO SOLVE WALL PROBLEM**

Approximately two years ago, a team effort was initiated between the Geotechnical Branch and the Bridge and Structures Office to find a way to improve the ability to handle the varieties of retaining walls available and make the wall pre-approval process function better. By having numerous pre-approved wall options available, time and labor-hours could be saved. The problem was solved when a Technical Working Group, chaired by Tony Allen, was formed under the AASHTO T-15 Bridge Technical Committee to develop MSE wall design guidelines which could be used to rewrite Section 5 of the AASHTO Bridge Specifications. This effort quickly grew national in scope due to the extreme interest of other state DOT's in having clearer and more complete design guidance for walls.

With the completed revision of Section 5, Structures Office and Geotechnical Branch can now proceed with retaining wall pre-approvals, with the help of the HITEC panel on walls. Because of this quality team effort, a clearer design practice for MSE wall design will result in more consistent and high quality designs as well as a level playing field for wall suppliers, a reduced effort to pre-approve new wall systems which will allow WSDOT to stay at the cutting edge of technology, and reduced effort by the regions to use MSE walls in WSDOT projects. Additionally, the section in the WSDOT Design Manual on retaining walls was rewritten by the Geotechnical Branch and the Structures Office team to provide clearer step-by-step guidance on how to implement the various types of retaining walls in projects.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR BIO-ENGINEERING APPLICATIONS COMPLETED**

The Roadside and Site Development Unit is finalizing new Design Manual and Roadside Manual chapters that provide guidelines for bio-engineering applications. The development of the guidelines has been guided by an interdisciplinary task force that consists of representatives from the Department of Ecology, as well as geo-engineering, biology, soils engineering, landscape architecture, and other region representatives.

#### **ITS CORRIDOR STUDY AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN COMPLETE**

The Seattle to Portland ITS Corridor Study and Communications Plan was completed in April, 1996. The primary objective of this project was to develop a recommended plan for implementing appropriate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology to address I-5 corridor transportation needs over the next 20 years.

From this project, 20 ITS projects with high benefit to cost ratios were identified. Projects included deploying corridor wide automated electronic vehicle clearance for commercial vehicles, deploying a WSDOT Seattle to Portland traffic related information system, demonstrating a portable SC&DI system that can be applied to work zone management, and developing and implementing a plan for the sharing of telecommunications resources within interstate rights-of-way.

The final report can be obtained from the WSDOT web site under a link entitled the Advanced Technology Branch.

#### **ITS MODEL DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED**

A team of 30 members that included Battelle, King County Metro Transit, the Cities of Seattle and Bellevue, PB Farradyne, David Evans and Associates, IBI Group, Pacific Rim Resources, US West, Microsoft, Boeing and WSDOT (including the Northwest Region, Olympic Region, Ferries and the Advanced Technology Branch) submitted an application for participation in the ITS Model Deployment Initiative. The application requests \$10.6 million in FY 96 funding and \$5.4 million in FY 97 funding. WSDOT will contribute almost \$1.9 million in state ITS matching funds. The project is called the Seattle TimeSaver (STS) Project and will showcase the benefits of providing an integrated, regional, multimodal traveler information system. If awarded, the project will start in mid 1996 and continue to the end of 1997. WSDOT will devote a full time manager and several additional staff to the project. USDOT is expected to award the project in mid-July.

#### **NEW REST AREA OPEN NEAR PACKWOOD**

A new rest area located at MP 126 about five miles west of Packwood opened on June 21, 1996. A formal grand opening ceremony will be held on July 10, at 1:30 p.m. and the public is invited. The rest area will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

WSDOT provided \$20,000 in grant funds and construction design review, along with many administrative hours of pulling various elements of the project together. The U.S. Forest Service provided a \$103,200 grant for the project. The Heritage Corridor Program contributed \$45,000 in grant funding. The total budget on the project was about \$340,000, with grants totaling \$168,200. Lewis County contributed \$171,800 plus labor and equipment.

#### **WSF CONTINUES WITH VESSEL PROJECTS**

Jumbo Mark II: 60 Units erected on launchways. The bottom is complete. Most of the lower vehicle deck and parts of the upper vehicle deck and passenger deck are in place. All major propulsion components have been installed.

Steel Electric Class: Contract award to Siemens. Initial meeting held, engineering commenced. Propulsion Control Procurement (ILLAHEE, QUINAULT, NISQUALLY).

#### Passenger -Only Ferry:

Engine proposals were scored and notified of highest engine score for the group of engines submitted. Initial negotiations were held, and Contractor/WSF final negotiations over Technical Specification will beheld the week of July 8th. Best and Final offers are due July 29th.

#### **OLYMPIA CHOSEN AS TEST SITE FOR CYCLING EVALUATIONS**

WSDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program helped recruit bicyclists for a national study the University of North Carolina was conducting for the Federal Highway Administration. Olympia was selected as one of three test sites because WSDOT could help find a location and recruit participants.

The goal of the study is to develop a procedure that will help engineers and planners improve streets for bicycling. A formula has been developed to rate streets for bicycling based on space for bicycling, traffic volumes, and traffic speeds. The research conducted in Olympia was seeing how well the formula results matched bicyclist's perception. Participants spent two hours viewing and rating over 100 video and audio tapes of roadways and intersections.

#### **MT. VERNON TRAINING FOCUSES ON STREETS & PEDESTRIANS**

Over 50 traffic engineers, transportation planners, tribal members and school district members attended the Division's Pedestrian Facilities and Design Course in Mt. Vernon. The 8-hour course is provided two to three times annually for transportation officials around the state. The dual slide presentation shows communities around the nation and globe that have implemented successful streets that encourage pedestrians but still retain vehicle capacity.

#### **PLANNING MODEL BEING DEVELOPED**

The Planning Office has been requested by FHWA to work with them to develop a model statewide planning process. This process will be based on our approach in developing the Washington Transportation Plan. It is intended to provide guidance to other states.

#### **HIGHER GASOLINE PRICES OFFSET**

The June 1995 motor fuel tax revenue forecast and forecasts of revenue from motor vehicle licenses, permits, and fees were presented to and adopted by the Interagency Revenue Task Force. The forecast of fuel tax revenue available for distribution during the next two biennia is almost unchanged when compared to the February forecast. Higher gasoline prices are offset by slightly lower passenger car fuel efficiency. The net impact is very little change to the fuel tax revenue forecast. Revisions to historical data, the new state forecast of personal income, and slower growth in revenue from trucks licensed by gross weight yield forecasts for licenses, permits, and fees which are less than 1 percent lower than the February forecast.

#### **REPORT LOOKS AT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The key findings from a review of the procedures WSDOT conducts and manages the development of construction projects is in a new report called *A Framework for the Constructability Review of Transportation Projects*. A model Constructability Review Process was developed along with other studies being conducted in-house on other aspects of improving the project development process. The main features of the Constructability Review Process are: (1) a project-level value engineering study for major projects prior to the determination of scope, schedule and budget for the project; (2) a set of up to four constructability reviews to be conducted at various stages of development of the PS&E (plans, specifications and estimates); and (3) a system of checklists and a compendium of lessons learned that will be developed for use throughout the project.

#### **WDOT NOT SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK PILOT**

Washington State Department of Transportation was notified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that we were not selected to be included in the State Infrastructure Bank pilot program. However, there is legislation being considered by the US Congress to increase the number of participating states in the pilot program. FHWA mentioned that Washington may have a good chance of participating in the pilot should the legislation pass.

#### **THE 50-STATE FUEL TAX COMPARISON AVAILABLE**

The 50-state fuel tax comparison was compiled and distributed. There have been no significant changes to Washington State's relative position in regard to rate of fuel taxation since Idaho increased its tax by 4¢/gallon in March of 1996. Copies of the updated comparison can be obtained by calling Elise Greef at (360)705-7529.

#### **NACHES RIVER BRIDGE CONTRACT AWARDED**

The contract to replace the flood damaged Naches River Bridge on SR 12 has been awarded to Weaver Construction Company of LaGrande, Oregon. Preliminary discussions with the contractor indicate he intends to diligently pursue construction of the replacement structure. The design of the replacement structure includes two pier shafts to be placed at 40' and 50' below ground level. This design should help prevent the structure from ever being washed away again.

#### **SR 395 SOUTH PROJECTS COME TO A CLOSE AFTER FIVE YEARS**

Construction efforts on State Route 395/Pasco to Ritzville are winding to a close after over five years of intensive work. The final project, SR 395/Lind to Ritzville-Stage 2, the Interstate 90 Interchange, will be essentially complete in late July. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for Tuesday, July 30 at 11:00 a.m. The ceremony will take place on the very last connecting ramp to be opened to traffic.

#### **AVIATION DIVISION SUPPORTS MT. BAKER SEARCH**

The Aviation Division provided helicopter support to Whatcom County in

the search for two missing hikers on Mount Baker. The mission, flown by the Division's Newell Lee and SAR Coordinator Floyd MacSpadden, was requested by the Emergency Operations Center in Olympia.

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN DEVELOPMENT**

The Aviation Division and Transportation Planning are proceeding with development of a Technical Assistance Program in compliance with the new Airport Land Use Encroachment Law. Program development is being initiated in cooperation with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. While the new law made reference to the Aviation Division Technical Assistance Program, it did not give the Division the additional authority. Since the law went into effect the Division has received an overwhelming response from communities seeking technical assistance.

#### **I-5 TO RECEIVE HOV/TRUCK-CLIMBING LANES NEAR SOUTHCENTER**

Work has begun to upgrade the existing, temporary HOV lane and add a truck-climbing lane to southbound I-5 between Southcenter and South 188th Street near Sea-Tac Airport.

The temporary HOV lane on the left will be upgraded to freeway standards, and a 10-foot shoulder will be added. Crews will construct a truck-climbing lane and upgrade the shoulder between the I-405 interchange and South 188th Street. Crews will also widen existing lanes, improve lighting and add surveillance, control and driver information (SC&DI) equipment, including ramp meters and closed-circuit TV cameras. This project is scheduled to continue through June of 1998.

#### **TRANSIT LANE ADDITION ON STATE ROUTE 522 UNDER WAY**

Work has begun on eastbound State Route 522 (Lake City Way, Bothell Way) to add a 12-foot-wide transit lane from 41st Avenue Northeast to 73rd Avenue Northeast. In addition to the lane, crews will also build retaining walls, add sidewalks, improve signals and add roadway signs.

The lane will be used exclusively by transit during evening peak commute hours, reducing the need for buses to merge in and out of traffic. During non-peak hours the lane will become an emergency shoulder for disabled vehicles.

At present crews are rebuilding the west roadway shoulder so it can support traffic when westbound SR 522 lanes will be shifted a few feet north onto the shoulder.

#### **“LEAD TEAM” FOCUSING ON TAKING ACTION/MAKING CHANGES**

On June 7, the AGC/WSDOT Joint Cooperative Committee Lead Team met at the AGC Office in Tacoma. This team will focus on bringing issues to each of the topic teams and will work to disseminate information on progress made by each team, particularly those issues that are acted on and result in change. The team also decided that the results of each team should be presented to other members of AGC at the annual meeting normally held during January.

### **MAY 1996 BIDS OPENED**

May 1996 bids were opened on seven preservation projects and two architectural projects for a total of nine new contracts. The total engineer's estimate was \$16,291,951, with total bids of \$16,138,406, or 0.94 percent below the estimate. There were 297 uncompleted contracts, with a total work-in-progress dollar value of \$1,316,344,257.00.

### **STATE ROUTE 308 PROJECT FOCUSES ON SAFETY**

An improvement project on SR 308 near Keyport demonstrates the benefits of the flexibility offered by ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act). Four-foot paved shoulders and guardrail will be added along a two-mile stretch of SR 308, giving motorists a safe place to pull off while providing room for the many pedestrians and bicyclists who use the roadway. The project is being funded through the I-2 Safety Improvements program, new this biennium. In the past, such safety work was tied to roadway overlay projects and often took years before an identified safety need was taken care of. With this new funding category, the department has the flexibility to put the money where the needs are most critical. Work is expected to be completed in mid-July.

### **US 101 PAVING COULD MEAN DRIVING WOES FOR COMMUTERS**

The Olympic Region is gearing up for two paving projects on US 101 that may have high impacts on motorists. Resurfacing will start in early July on US 101 between Cosmopolis and Raymond. The two-lane highway will be restricted to one lane Monday through Thursday, from July to September, and traffic delays of up to 20 minutes are anticipated. Beginning in mid-July, westbound US 101 in Olympia will be reduced to one lane between Black Lake Boulevard and the junction with State Route 8. For the most part, paving crews will work from the early morning hours to 3 p.m. Some short-term ramp closures will occur. This project is expected to be completed prior to Labor Day.

### **STAMPEDE PASS TO RECEIVE AT-GRADE CROSSING ANALYSIS**

The WSDOT Freight Rail Program has commissioned the HDR Engineering consulting firm to do an at-grade railroad crossing analysis on the BNSF's Stampede Pass rail line between Auburn and Pasco. The catalyst for the study is the resumption of freight train operations over Stampede Pass in late 1996 and how motor vehicle traffic at the railroad crossings will be impacted. HDR will contact local city and county government officials to determine which railroad crossings should be analyzed when train operations resume. After receiving the railroad crossing information from the local communities, HDR will perform accident exposure analysis by utilizing the Federal Railroad Administration methodology of analyzing grade crossings and conduct traffic delay analysis on the crossings to determine expected vehicle delays resulting from increased train movements.

## **WSDOT PARTNERSHIP HELPS LOCATE JOBS**

For the past year, Public Transportation & Rail Division has been a member of a task force that looks at placement of low income job seekers in suburban work locations with poor transit access. These jobs are not usually available to low income inner city residents due to lack of transportation. The Seattle-Preston Workforce Connection was formed to develop a model to assist low income individuals gain access to these jobs. Members of the task force include the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Tarah and Associates, King County-Metro, Private Industry Council, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Employment Security, and WSDOT.

The project has been funded with WSDOT's Power Washington funds as well as a subsidy from Metro. This project is being used as a model for other similar projects in Puget Sound. A press conference is being planned for late July highlighting the uniqueness of this project, its innovative, successful partnership which saves dollars, eliminates duplication of effort and provides low income workers with job opportunities.

## **CITY/COUNTY BRIDGES SELECTED FOR MUCH NEEDED MAKE-OVER**

The Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee (BRAC) has selected a total of 66 bridges for painting, replacement, rehabilitation, or seismic retrofitting. The following city & county projects are funded through TransAid at a total of \$14.3 million for all categories listed.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Bridges</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost (millions)</b>
Bridge Painting	11	\$ .8
Seismic Retrofitting	21	\$2.1
Rehabilitation	8	\$2.0
Replacement	26	\$9.4

In the past, selections made by the BRAC were for bridge replacement; however, the bridge program has been very effective in replacing the most critical bridges so that now, more selections for rehabilitation can be made.

Funding for these bridge projects is from the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP), which is part of ISTEA. The funds will cover 80% of project costs, with the remaining 20% paid by local matching funds.

## **90,000 SURVEYS COLLECTED ON NARROW BRIDGE PROJECT**



Traffic data collection was completed on SR 16 at the Tacoma Narrows bridge and the northern weigh station as well as on SR 101 south of Eldon, SR 3 at the Mason/Kitsap line and eight ferry routes. Over 90,000 surveys were mailed to registered vehicle owners to obtain origin-destination data, which will be used in the Major Investment Study (MIS), Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and advisory election boundary studies for the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows project. At month's end, TEP and United Infrastructure Washington (UIW) concluded the Agreement for UIW work products and services on the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows project. The Agreement was the subject of extended negotiations as well as review by WSDOT executives during June. Following execution of the Agreement, UIW will begin work in the first week of July on the MIS, public involvement activities, and related engineering and technical work. UIW's scope of work is scheduled for 10 months and represents the first step in the MIS/EIS process leading up to the advisory vote on the project in the fall of 1998.

#### **PUBLIC EXPRESSES OPINION OVER PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS**

Over 7,000 public opinion surveys were sent to registered owners of vehicles using park-and-ride lots in King County to gain input on developing and financing projects. In addition, a random telephone survey will be conducted to determine the attitudes and opinions of those who do not use park-and-ride lots. Perini Corporation completed its final set of meetings with local jurisdictions affected by proposed park-and-ride improvements. The Local Involvement Committee (LIC) held its first meeting and was briefed on the project by TEP and Perini. Comprised of local officials, the LIC initially will provide advice to Perini and WSDOT on public involvement activities related to the project. Five more public meetings will be held in Federal Way, Bellevue, Seattle, Tukwila, and Bothell.

#### **MILWAUKEE ROAD CORRIDOR PROJECT JOINTLY DRAFTED**

An interagency agreement for the three-year Milwaukee Road Corridor project was jointly drafted by staff of Transportation Economic Partnerships (TEP), State Parks and Recreation and the Department of Natural Resources. Following execution of this umbrella agreement in July, annual bi-agency agreements will be developed for specific project deliverables and funding. In preparation for this, TEP personnel initiated discussions with OSC Communications and Real Estate Services concerning WSDOT tasks in the coming year. At month's end, TEP and State Parks personnel briefed the Freight Rail and Freight Mobility Task Force of the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) in Walla Walla on the Milwaukee Road project.

#### **WASHINGTON STATE DISPARITY STUDY UNDERWAY**

In compliance with the dictates of the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) regulations, WSDOT operates a program which in several aspects is distinct from the State funded program. While a number of the programmatic requirements of the federal DBE program will be examined in the context of the Washington State Disparity Study (initiated by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE)), there are several distinct aspects which are basic to the federal program, but which are not

within the Study's scope. A study of WSDOT's DBE program would complement the Disparity Study and therefore also make it responsive to *Adarand*. To assist OMWBE in the collection of data, a meeting was held with representatives from Construction, Consultants, Purchasing, MIS, TransAid, Real Estate, Contract Ad and Award and the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). Research products unique to WSDOT are: analysis of subcontracting utilization in construction and professional services, documentation of actual expenditures versus awards to DBE subcontractors, anecdotal evidence of barriers confronting DBEs in highway construction, description of WSDOT's race neutral efforts, definition of available DBEs, and analysis of the *Adarand* decision and subsequent federal rule making.

#### **OKANOGAN MAINTENANCE FACILITY COMPLETED**

The new Okanogan maintenance facility was completed on June 12, 1996. The total cost for building and site work was \$2.8 million.

The project established a new level of involvement for the North Central Region in the development of region facilities. The region worked with OSC from the design stage through construction. The benefits of this level of involvement are a higher level of user satisfaction with end product and pride of ownership.

#### **WENATCHEE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY NEARLY COMPLETE**

Wenatchee Area Transportation Study (WATS) is nearing completion! WSDOT, LINK, Chelan and Douglas Counties, and the cities of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee have been coordinating for over the past five years on the urban area transportation issues. Started before the implementation of Growth Management, this process already incorporated much of the spirit and intent of the final growth management legislation. The study has been modified through the years to reflect the requirements of GMA. The final draft of the study was presented to the public on June 10th. The Final WATS plan will be completed by late summer, and presented to the public at an open house informational meeting.

#### **OMBUDSMAN OFFICE MAKING HEADWAY IN VARIOUS PROJECTS**

The Ombudsman Office was busy this past month tackling various projects and issues. Accomplishments for last month include: an Ombudsman Office homepage, a 1-800 phone number to be published in all state and local phone books, and an e-mail address with the LTC to keep them informed of issues related to WSDOT that may affect/interest them.

#### **QUALITY ITEMS:**

##### **COMBINED DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION MEETING**

The first ever design/construction combined state meeting was held in Wenatchee this month. Quality principles, specifically contingency diagramming and prevention checklists, were used by cross-functional work

teams to begin to address key areas of concern in the combined units' goal of providing a quality project.

#### **E-MAIL PROCEDURE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW COPIES OF ADDENDA**

As part of our on-going TQM Quality Improvement process, an e-mail procedure has been developed for distribution and responses to review copies of addenda prepared by the OSC Plans Branch. This process was tested with Region Plan Review staff and various OSC offices and all responses have been favorable.

#### **STATUS REPORT OF RIGHT OF WAY PLANS /REVISIONS ON INTERNET**

On May 30, the Status Report of Right of Way Plans and Revisions was put on the Internet. This allows anyone in the world to instantly see the status of the projects that are in-house in the Plans Branch. This will help customers track their projects and increase efficiency. The report will be updated weekly.

#### **PARTNERSHIP PROJECT USING QUALITY MEASURES**

The L&I and WSF Partnership Project held three preliminary meetings in order to draft their "Objective Statement" and "Strategic Goals" of the Partnership Project. A group of Operations Department management and staff fine tuned the draft for WSF and DOT Executive review using the Quality Blueprint. The group developed a simple process flow diagram of how WSF works with the Coast Guard and is hoping to see if and where this process will work with L&I. Members of the group are preparing to interview other WSF departments to align goals before meeting again with L&I. Overall objectives are a safe environment for employees and a process of communication and education between the two agencies.

#### **F & A QUALITY TEAM SEEKING TO IMPROVE FORMS MANAGEMENT**

A Finance and Administration quality team has been formed to identify and improve the processes involved in managing the department's approximately 1,400 forms. The team began by charting two of its current processes - the forms order/reorder process and the forms creation/revision process. Ten misalignments with the current processes were identified. A poster was then created outlining those processes and misalignments. This poster was sent to each region supply officer and maintenance engineer to post in areas where forms customers will have access to it and will be able to input their ideas. A poster will also be placed on the bulletin board in the C wing of the OSC service level. At their next meeting the input received will be included into the process and misalignments will be prioritized, enabling the team improve the way business is done.

#### **LETTERS NO LONGER NEEDED IN CLOSURE PROCESS**

In an effort to be more efficient, the closure process for agreements has been simplified. Because of discussions between the Audit Office and the Comptroller's Office, the Comptroller's Office is no longer requiring "closed

without audit” letters. In the past, consultant agreements under \$100,000 have required a “closed without audit letter”. After discussions with Program Management and FHWA, it was determined that these letters are not necessary to the process of closing the agreements.

### **QUALITY TEAM STRIDING TO SAVE TIME/IMPROVE PRODUCT**

The Construction Engineering Quality Team (CEQT) is currently assessing the various construction inspection processes for areas of potential savings of labor while maintaining quality. These savings will free up some of our inspectors’ time enabling them to do a better job of inspecting. At the May meeting seven field inspectors were present to help provide the team with profound knowledge about the processes being assessed. One of the messages that came through from these field personnel was that they have to prioritize which of the contractor’s activities to be present for, since there are not enough people to go around.

The team recently completed and had approved a change request eliminating the requirement for sampling and testing commercial concrete. Commercial concrete is not used in applications where structural strength is a critical requirement. We do retain the option of testing the concrete if we suspect that something is wrong. The labor savings from this change is estimated at 900 hours per year statewide.

The team is currently working a change request with the Design office and the supplier community to eliminate the requirement for the state to assure that impact attenuators and proprietary end treatments for guardrail are installed correctly. Many of these undergo design changes almost annually and much time is invested in learning how these are to be installed. With this change, the supplier will either inspect the installations and certify that they are done correctly, or will train the contractor’s installers and certify that they know how to install the devices correctly and the contractor will certify the installation. The labor savings due to this change is estimated at 1080 hours per year statewide.

These changes will not save a large amount of labor individually, but in the aggregate will provide our inspectors with vitally needed time to assure that the work being completed by the contractor meets the requirements included in the contract.

### **GOOD NEWS ITEMS:**

#### **LABOR RELATIONS REACHING AGREEMENT**

MM&P: The membership voted to ratify the 93/95 and 95/97 contracts. The language has been drafted and we now have a contract in place for MM&P.

MEBA: An agreement was reached on all outstanding issues during the month of June. Contract language is currently being drafted for review by both parties. We anticipate that the membership will vote for ratification of 93/95 and 95/97 contracts during the latter part of July.

IBU: An agreement was reached with the IBU on June 24, 1996. The parties are drafting the language for review and approval by both parties. We anticipate that the membership will vote for ratification of the 95/97 contract by mid August, 1996.

OPEIU: WSF negotiation team met with the OPEIU in June to begin bargaining the 95/97 labor agreement. The OPEIU has been unwilling to respond ratification of to WSF contract proposals and has refused to declare impasse. WSF continues to meet and bargain in good faith with three more sessions currently scheduled in July.

### **ONE-STOP SHOPPING IN NEW GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**

Effective June 17, 1996, Desktop Publishing and Graphics combined. This combination of services is called Graphic Communications and the intent is to provide a "one-stop-shopping" office to better serve customers' publications needs. The newly combined office is now fully operational and is located on the third floor A wing of the Olympia Service Center. As a result of this move, Forms Management relocated to Room 1A2 of the Olympia Service Center. The mail stops and telephone numbers remain the same.

### **"DRAGNET" SNARES ERRANT DRIVERS**

Roger Steinert of the Northwest Region convinced the construction program to buy an innovative and relatively economical traffic control device--the Dragnet Vehicle Arresting Barrier.

The \$10,000 "Dragnet" is a net that spans a roadway much like a tennis net. It uses the same technology found on aircraft carriers to catch landing fighter jets--a series of pulleys and cables drag the net to a stop when vehicles drive into it.

For several months now the Dragnet has protected WSDOT's workers in construction zones, but another use for the Dragnet was discovered--blocking a southbound entrance to the I-5 Express Lanes where a few unfortunate drivers have blasted through gates into oncoming traffic.

With Dragnet a safety success, money in the Traffic Operations Program bought a second Dragnet system. Staff from the Signal Maintenance Office set up the new system. Shortly there after, a driver and his 3/4-ton truck plowed through three gates and into the net, which stopped him cold. He was unhurt, his truck only slightly damaged. More possibilities to use the Dragnet are already under consideration.

### **HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION EARNS AWARD**

Steve Lowell, WSDOT's Chief Engineering Geologist, was presented with the L. I. Hewes Award at the WASHTO Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The award honors an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to highway development in the Western United States.

Steve was recognized for the work he and his team did to create a system for identifying and ranking unstable slopes in Washington. He developed a "scoring" method that includes likelihood and danger criteria and enables the Department to direct funds efficiently to stabilize unstable slopes which are impacting our transportation system. The unstable slope program ensures that the slopes which potentially have the greatest impact to the public and the highest benefit-to-cost ratio get the highest priority for funding.

### **GOAL SET AND READY TO ACHIEVE**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has completed its review of WSDOT's DBE goal submitted on May 20, 1996. FTA approved WSDOT's DBE goal of 16% as of October 1, 1995.

### **COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PLAN WORKS FOR LARGE OR SMALL**

North Central Region has voluntarily joined the ranks of all the other WSDOT regions to implement a Commute Trip Reduction plan. Although not required (since none of the work sites employ more than 100 individuals) the Region had several reasons to develop a program. First was to encourage WSDOT workers out of their cars and give them the opportunity to receive the incentives available. The second was to develop a program that other area businesses and public agencies could model. North Central Region has 40 to 50 people active monthly in the program.